



Planning & Community Development

Annual Report Oct 2004 - Sept 2005

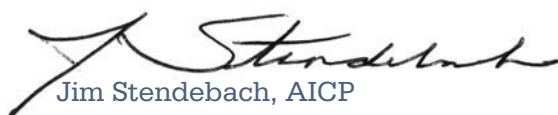
A Message from the Director

This year has been an exceptional one for major developments in the City of Round Rock. Many major projects that will change the face of our City have been either approved or completed in the last year, including:

- The new Wal-Mart Supercenter, using a new design required to meet the Palm Valley development standards. This design has received national attention;
- The first building of the new Texas State University campus in Round Rock;
- The new Round Rock Crossing shopping center which redeveloped a significant area of depressed retail at the entrance to Round Rock;
- The Simon/Chelsea Round Rock Premium Outlets bring a major “destination retail” use to our City that will attract millions of shoppers from outside the local market area;
- The IKEA development brings another “destination retail” use to our City. Round Rock is now included in a very limited list of IKEA locations in the nation;
- A major expansion of the Round Rock Hospital; and
- A new hospital complex for Scott & White.

These are only some of the largest projects underway or completed in our City. They will change the character of Round Rock by providing a depth to both the services available to our citizens and the economic base of the community. In addition to diversifying the tax base, these developments will result in numerous “spin off” developments. They will also present the community with numerous challenges resulting from the permanent changes they make to the community, which will be addressed in the final revisions to the General Plan.

Our department looks forward to planning for the many changes occurring in our dynamic community.



Jim Stendebach, AICP



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Long-Range Planning

The Department's long-range planning division has focused its efforts on completing the Southwest Downtown Plan, initiating a supplement to the General Plan 2000 and finalizing the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The General Plan supplement addresses the development potential of the northeast quadrant of the city in light of changing market conditions, particularly along IH-35 and Chandler Road.

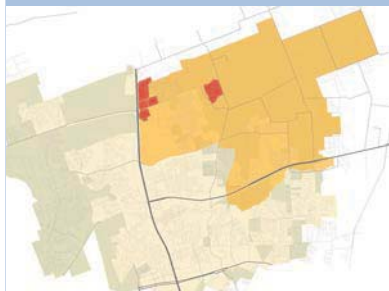
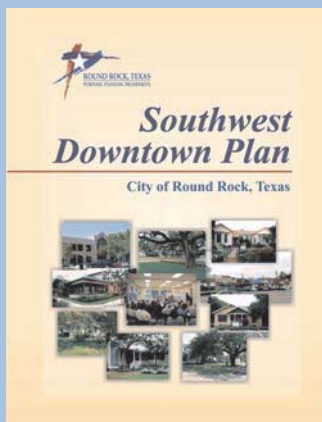
General Plan Amendments

The **Southwest Downtown Plan** was adopted in February. The Plan presents a strategy to facilitate (re)development in this older transitional neighborhood through a combination of the following:

- Infrastructure and street improvements;
- A proposed mixed-use zoning district that accommodates the range of existing and desired land uses in the plan area more easily than existing zoning districts;
- A parking strategy to address the limitations of the area's small lots and make use of the large pool of available street parking;
- Special development standards that are compatible with the plan area's traditional neighborhood structure; and
- Additional compatibility standards to ensure that residential and non-residential uses coexist with minimal conflict.

The new **Mixed-Use Zoning District** (MU-1a) that was proposed in the Southwest Downtown Plan will be considered for adoption by the City Council in November 2005.

The **Northeast Plan** is a four-phase supplement to the General Plan 2000 that revises the future land use map to reflect changes in market conditions and to ensure consistency between the market, the future land use map, and the City's goals and objectives. The Future Land Use Map adopted in the General Plan 2000 indicates residential uses for the largely undeveloped northeast quadrant of the city, with light industry and business parks along IH-35. Market conditions have changed in the five years since its adoption, with several major projects outside the IH-35 / FM 1325 area, including multiple major retail centers, the Higher Education Center and two proposed hospitals. The outdated specifications in the Future Land Use Map had become an impediment to development in the area.



The Northeast Plan addresses issues in a largely undeveloped area of the city and ETJ (orange). The plan area has recently become the focus of several major developments (red).

Long-Range Planning *Continued*

Phase 1 of the **Northeast Plan** was adopted in August and addresses the major retail hub along IH-35 near Chandler Road. Phase 2 is nearing completion and addresses the area between the IH-35 frontage properties and FM 1460. This area demands a more complex range of uses surrounding major institutions including the Higher Education Center and Seton hospital. Phases 3 and 4 will be completed at a later date as the impact of SH 130 becomes clear.

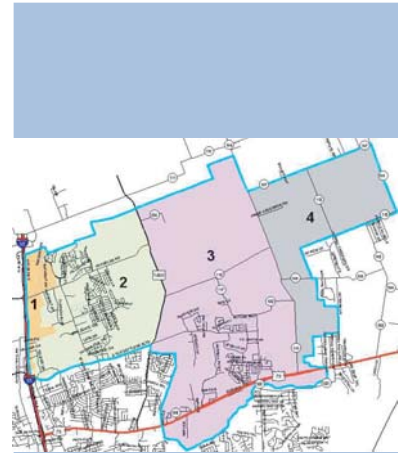
The City's **extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)** limits have been finalized after negotiations with neighboring cities. Establishing the extent to which the city can ultimately expand allows us to begin crafting a systematic plan for annexing and extending city services into these areas.

Major Projects

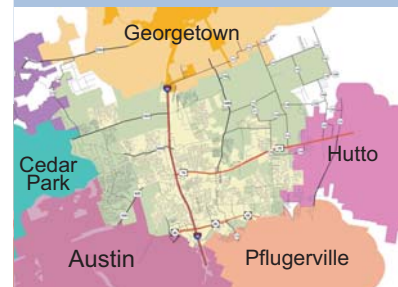
The new **Super Wal-Mart** on US 79 has received recognition from the real estate and planning press for its “Main Street” façade design that masks its big-box bulk. The design is a result of regulations spelled out in the Palm Valley Overlay Zoning District and Wal-Mart's willingness to deviate from its prototype façade. Kudos from the Urban Land Institute and Texas A&M's *RECON* newsletter have prompted inquiries from other planning departments that are interested in tailoring big-box development to local conditions.

The **Simon/Chelsea Round Rock Premium Outlets** broke ground in July, the first of several major retail projects near IH-35 and Chandler Road. In addition to the estimated 600,000 square feet of outlet shopping, the development will include nearby restaurants and a hotel with conference facilities. Additional retail shopping centers are also planned for the sites both north and south of the outlets. The high-end outlet stores will be a significant source of sales tax revenue for the city, drawing a projected 5 to 6 million shoppers per year, many from outside the city and even outside Texas. Planning staff created three PUDs to accommodate the range of uses and to specify high-quality design standards in the outlet center and adjacent retail developments.

Swedish furniture retailer **IKEA** will occupy a site just south of the Premium Outlets. While IKEA is a major global retailer with stores in 35 countries, it is relatively new in the U.S. with only 27 stores in thirteen states. As it is expected to draw 1.5 to 2 million customers per year, the store will be a major generator of employment, sales tax revenue and neighboring retail. The IKEA PUD agreement addresses the needs of a store of its unusual size (252,000 square feet) by incorporating special provisions for building appearance, signage, landscaping,



The Northeast plan will be developed in four phases.



Round Rock's ETJ configuration (olive green) after negotiations with neighboring cities.



The new Wal-Mart's "Main Street" facade.



The Simon/Chelsea Round Rock Premium Outlets.

Long-Range Planning *Continued*



An IKEA store in Spain.



The first building in the HEC campus has been completed.



"Stealth" WTF tower combined with street lamp.

driveways and other design issues. The **Endeavor Real Estate Group** is developing another retail complex which is intended to complement the neighboring IKEA and Simon/Chelsea developments. The Endeavor tract's appearance, site layout and retail tenants are intended to complement the IKEA store. Building material specifications repeat the masonry style of the Premium Outlets, strengthening the aesthetic continuity of the retail area.

The new **Higher Education Center (HEC)** welcomed its first group of students this fall. A collaborative effort between Austin Community College, Temple College at Taylor and Southwest Texas State University-San Marcos, the HEC offers associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees along with professional certification programs. The HEC and neighboring **Seton Medical Center** will create a major new institutional focus. Their impact on development conditions in the surrounding area will be addressed in Phases 2 and 3 of the **Northeast Plan**.

Ordinance Updates

Part of the Planning Department's role is to continually review existing planning ordinances to ensure that they remain consistent with their original intent while at the same time accounting for changes in the community.

The **Wireless Transmission Facilities (WTF) Ordinance** has been revised to reflect industry needs and improvements in technology, providing opportunities for stealth technology and improving reception and coverage in residential areas. Special attention was given to compatibility issues with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Revisions to the **Subdivision Ordinance** became effective January 15, 2005. These revisions update subdivision standards and submittal requirements as well as streamline the subdivision approval process. Revisions were developed with the input of focus groups representing local and regional engineers, developers, utility providers and members of the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin.

The **Public Facilities (PF) zoning district** has been expanded from one to three districts of different development intensities to accommodate higher-intensity institutional uses. This has allowed projects such as churches, schools and hospitals (including the Scott & White and Seton Medical Centers) to be developed under standard PF zoning rather than PUDs, thus expediting the development approval process for both the developer and the City.

Long-Range Planning *Continued*

The **Tree Protection & Preservation Ordinance** became effective in January 2005. This new ordinance provides greater protection to very large trees while specifying more practical and less stringent replacement requirements for smaller trees.

Planning & Zoning Commission Retreat

The Planning & Zoning Commission held its annual retreat on September 27, 2005, to discuss goals and future planning policy. The Commission's concerns will be investigated further through staff research and by soliciting the City Council's input. Some of the issues of concern to the Commission are:

- Community appearance issues, including garage conversions, parking in yards and parking commercial vehicles in residential neighborhoods;
- Design and/or landscaping standards for single-family development, as some neighboring communities are beginning to require;
- Creating a street tree program for collectors and arterials as a long-term investment in the city's appearance and quality of life;
- Revisions to the sign ordinance to address concerns of both the business community and the public; and
- Possibly revisiting single-family lot coverage requirements, which builders have been increasingly likely to exceed due to rising land prices.

Revised Population Projections

Round Rock's population projections are updated every five years in light of current development and available Census data. With the recent approval of four large MUDs (Municipal Utility Districts), a significant portion of the population increase that was expected within the city limits will instead be located just outside them. For planning purposes it has become necessary to account for both the population within the city limits as well as for the "Greater Round Rock" population.

Projected population:

Year	City of Round Rock	5-year increase	"Greater" Round Rock	5-year increase
2005	82,311	n/a	113,214	n/a
2010	100,815	22%	148,258	31%
2015	115,567	15%	175,023	18%
2020	133,264	15%	194,030	11%
2025	150,776	13%	212,852	10%

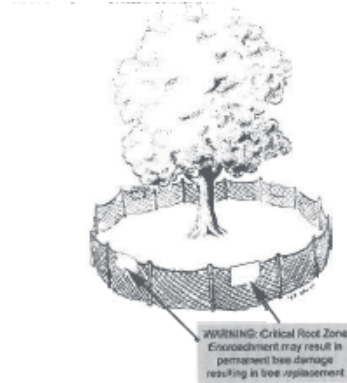
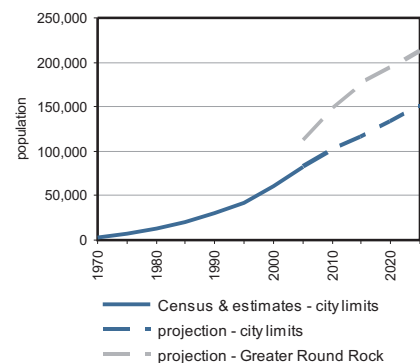


Illustration from the *Tree Protection & Preservation Ordinance Technical Manual* showing measures to preserve large trees during site construction.

Population Projections



FY 2004-2005
Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

OCT
NOV
DEC JAN
FEB
MAR APR
MAY
JUN JUL
AUG
SEP

Current Planning

14	32	6	20
2	4	0	4
11	19	0	9
0	8	6	7
1	1	0	0
6	24	3	11
0	0	0	0
7	8	3	8
1	0	0	1
25	46	37	66
2	6	3	9
7	17	9	17
16	16	20	37
0	7	5	3
17	29	21	56
1	0	0	0
7	17	15	8
0	0	1	2
1	4	3	4
1	4	3	4
0	0	1	3
0	0	1	2
36	61	65	67
12	10	16	20
4	6	11	6
11	12	12	7
0	1	0	1
0	2	2	1
0	18	160	29
0	3	0	0
0	2	0	0

Planning & Zoning Commission:

Zoning Cases (all)

Original Zoning
Rezoning (including PUD to Standard Zoning)
PUD Zoning or PUD Amendments
Land use agreements in ETJ

Commission Actions:

Positive or Conditional Recommendations
Negative Recommendations
Tabled
Withdrawn or Returned

Plats reviewed (all)

Concept Plans
Preliminary Plats
Final Plats
Replats & Amended Plats

Commission Actions:

Approved or Conditionally Approved
Disapproved
Tabled
Withdrawn

Plat extensions reviewed

Plat extensions approved

Vacations reviewed

Vacations approved

Development Review Committee (DRC):

Site plans reviewed (*includes preliminary plans, final plans & revisions*)
Site plans approved
Site inspections performed

Building Permit Review:

Projects approved

License Agreements: (permitting construction in the right-of-way)

Agreements approved

Annexations:

Number of annexations
Acres annexed (207 total)

Zoning Board of Adjustment:

Cases reviewed
Variances granted

Current Planning *Continued*

A comparison of the number of zoning, platting and site plan applications to last year's figures indicates increasing development activity in Round Rock. The increased number of new PUDs over last year reflects the increase in complex new projects such as the Simon/Chelsea Outlets and IKEA store. The total number of approved plats has increased by roughly half over last year. The total number of site plans reviewed has increased by approximately one-third over last year, with the increase primarily due to small office suites and all scales of commercial development. Building review caseloads have increased similarly.

FY 2004-2005			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
OCT	JAN	APR	JUL
NOV	FEB	MAY	AUG
DEC	MAR	JUN	SEP

Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Commission:

Cases reviewed

2 1 7 3

Cases approved

2 1 5 3

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) received fifty-seven applications for **partial tax exemptions for historically significant sites** this year. Commissioners conducted property inspections in May to verify that exemption recipients are maintaining their properties in accordance with the zoning ordinance. This year all applicants were approved for exemptions, but the thirty who received "fair" ratings on some items must improve them in order to qualify next year.

The Texas Historical Commission has approved the establishment of the **Texas Hill Country Trail Region** as part of its Heritage Trails Program. The Planning Department and PARD have both been instrumental in representing Round Rock and coordinating application materials from all over Williamson County. The Heritage Trails Program combines historic preservation and tourism to promote visits to Texas' historic and cultural sites. Participation in the program is free, and the City will be eligible for grant opportunities and receive media placements and advertising, including travel brochures. The Hill Country Trail "kickoff" will take place January 12, 2006, in Kerrville.

In August, the HPC elected Chairman Gary Brown and Vice-Chairman Lynn Smith. The HPC also gave a fond farewell to former Commissioners Bob Brinkman, who has served the Commission for fifteen years including twelve as Chairperson, and Ellen Macaulay, who has served for eight years, including six as Vice-Chairperson.



The Round Rock - one of the historic sites included in the Texas Hill Country Trail Region (note the wagon tracks in the creekbed in the foreground).

Maintenance

The GIS office's primary function is to maintain current mapping files for the use of the City and the public. All preliminary plats, final plats, replats, zoning changes, address points, MUDs, annexations, and changes to street geometry, the city limits or the extent of the ETJ must be entered within thirty days of Council approval/adoption to keep the mapping system current.

Projects

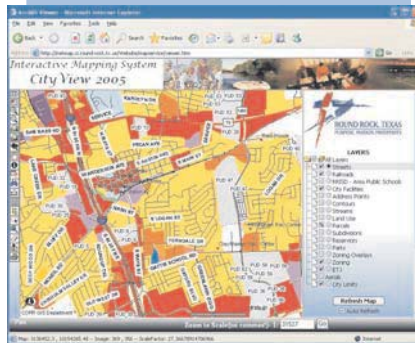
The department has created a new **Current Land Use layer** for the City's GIS dataset. This layer extends into the ETJ, which is not subject to zoning regulation. It also gives a clearer picture of actual land use, including undeveloped parcels and zoning nonconformities, thus indicating actual development conditions within the city.

GIS has worked with emergency services to create a **reverse notification system**, which calls residents directly in the event of an emergency rather than waiting for residents to call 911.

The **Internet Map Server (IMS)** has been upgraded to connect directly to the Spatial Database Engine (SDE), so that users have access to the most current GIS data. The IMS allows users to access GIS data from any networked computer without additional software. The system is used by city employees without GIS software licenses, other government organizations, the development community, realtors and the general public.

GIS continues to work with Williamson County to create a **seamless county wide dataset**. Currently the county's dataset does not include data in major cities, while the City's dataset does not extend past the ETJ. Where the datasets meet, they are not always consistent. This project aims to correct the situation, providing more complete data for all parties.

GIS has also provided extensive **mapping support** for many City projects, including ETJ negotiations with neighboring communities, support for the Fire Department in determining response areas, and the Computer-Aided Dispatch system.



The Internet Map Server (IMS) as displayed in a standard Microsoft Explorer web browser window.

Code Enforcement

FY 2004-2005

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
OCT NOV DEC	JAN FEB MAR	APR MAY JUN	JUL AUG SEP

Total violations reported	214	117	363	360
Total violations abated	192	93	360	344
Building violations reported	6	13	13	13
Building violations abated	0	8	13	12
Parking violations reported	3	0	0	3
Parking violations abated	3	0	0	3
Zoning violations reported	4	4	14	10
Zoning violations abated	2	2	11	9
Health & safety violations reported	201	100	336	334
Health & safety violations abated	187	83	336	320
Sign permits reviewed	33	33	35	33
Illegal signs removed from right-of-way	773	882	1108	1727
Presentations to neighborhood & community groups	0	2	0	1

Note: "Reported" includes all violations reported to the City, whether or not a violation was later determined to have been committed. "Abated" includes all confirmed violations that are corrected, either by the owner or by the City.

Over the summer, Code Enforcement began to step up enforcement of illegal signs in the right-of-way. These signs typically advertise garage sales, real estate, work-at-home and weight-loss schemes. A city employee has been hired on a part-time basis to remove "bandit signs" on the weekends, when they usually appear. On average, Code staff remove 250-300 of these signs each weekend. Homebuilders are now advertising on kiosk signs that are strategically located to direct buyers to their properties, and real estate and garage sales are now advertised in local papers. Community appearance has improved and the department has received a lot of positive feedback from the community as a result of these efforts.

This year Code Enforcement is improving its efficiency with updated technology. Officers carry laptops in their vehicles and soon will be able to print out violation notices on the spot rather than printing them at the office and making another trip. Violations will also be logged into the city's GIS system so that they can easily be referenced when processing zoning verification requests.



Illegal "bandit signs" removed from the city's right-of-way.

FY 2004-2005
Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

OCT
NOV
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MAR APR
MAY
JUN JUL
AUG
SEP

Community Development

The Community Development Office manages Round Rock's Community Development Block Grant program, providing assistance and investment to round Rock's underserved residents and communities. All funding for programs and staff are provided by the Federal Block Grant.

HOAP (Home Ownership Assistance Program):

HOAP classes held (English)

HOAP classes held (Spanish)

Households attending (all)

HOAP down payment assistance applications received

HOAP applications approved

Small Business Advising:

Advising interviews with small business owners

Eight homeowners have been approved for **Minor Home Repair Loans** with funds from the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 fiscal years. Program funding for rehabilitation has increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000 per property. New applications will be accepted for the 2005-2006 fiscal year after repairs to the first eight properties are completed. This program has widespread benefits for the city as a whole as well as the individuals it assists directly.

Recently, the Office of Community Development worked with local community service organizations to distribute funding for emergency housing, food and medical assistance to **Hurricane Katrina evacuees** in Round Rock. A total of \$49,355 was distributed within the community for hurricane-related assistance in the form of housing and transportation vouchers. A portion of these funds was also used to pay for the medical costs of a relocated nursing home resident.

Last summer, the Community Development Office began to formulate an **Affordable Housing Plan** for Round Rock. The plan will address the affordable housing issue through a combination of incentives, homeownership assistance, rental vouchers and/or publicly-owned properties.

The **Homeless Initiative Task Force** is a committee representing service agencies in Williamson County created to study and address the issue of homelessness within the County. The Task Force is researching the causes and scope of the problem, and how it can be addressed through the coordination of care resources including substance abuse treatment, child care, transportation, education, job and life skills training, HIV/AIDS, health and mental health care.

5	3	3	3
1	1	0	1
30	17	25	24
4	6	14	4
0	4	2	4
14	10	13	16



Participants in a HOAP home-buying preparedness class.



Planning & Community Development Department Staff:

Jim Stendebach, Planning Director

Administration:

Vickie Moreno, Office Manager - *budget, timesheets & City Council agenda*

Richelle Gonelli, Administrative Technician III - *administrative support to the Director*

Amy Swaim, Administrative Technician II - *receptionist, site planning & historic preservation support*

Planning:

Susan Brennan, Planning Coordinator - *strategic planning, ordinance updates & zoning*

Nicole Crutchfield, Principal Planner - *site planning coordinator & Development Review Committee Chair*

Joelle Jordan, Senior Planner - *long-range, neighborhood & historic preservation planning*

Bernadette Hayes, Senior Planner - *subdivision platting & annexation*

Shannon Burke, Senior Planner - *zoning, PUDs & long-range planning*

Taylor Horton, Planner - *site planning & Development Review Committee*

Kerstin Harding, Planning Technician - *zoning & long-range planning support*

Dianna Hutchens, Administrative Technician III - *subdivision platting & annexation support*

GIS:

Chris Collier, GIS Coordinator - *GIS architecture & systems integration*

Steve Byrd, ITC/GIS - *database support, web mapping & application development*

Randy Hitt, GIS Analyst - *layer maintenance & advanced mapping*

Kelly Farley, GIS Analyst - *mapping & modeling*

Kim Jones, GIS Technician - *mapping & addressing*

Community Development:

Mona Ryan, Community Development Coordinator - *HUD programs oversight & compliance*

Margie Lopez, Community Development Specialist - *housing specialist*

Code Enforcement:

Rick Clark, Code Enforcement Officer - *sign review, code & zoning enforcement*

Rex Richardson, Senior Code Officer - *abatement administration, sign & zoning enforcement*

Angel Martinez, Code Officer - *sign & code enforcement*

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To :

